AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (canceled):

2. (currently amended): A steering locking device ~~according to Claim 1,~~ comprising a locking device for automatically locking a steering shaft when a key of an ignition switch is withdrawn in a state in which said key is withdrawable,

wherein a key mechanism section and said locking device of said ignition switch are provided separately,

~~wherein~~ said locking device is provided at ~~the~~ a steering gear section having a rack & pinion mechanism,

said rack & pinion mechanism including: a pinion shaft connected to said steering shaft; and a rack shaft disposed at a midpoint of a tie rod which connects tires on both sides, and

said pinion shaft and said rack shaft are adapted to convert a rotational movement from said steering shaft to a linear movement of said tie rod.

3. (currently amended): A steering locking device ~~according to Claim 1,~~ comprising a locking device for automatically locking a steering shaft when a key of an ignition switch is withdrawn in a state in which said key is withdrawable,

wherein a key mechanism section and said locking device of said ignition switch are provided separately, and

~~wherein~~ said locking device is provided about a pinion shaft of ~~said~~ a steering gear section having a rack & pinion mechanism,

said rack & pinion mechanism including: a pinion shaft connected to said steering shaft; and a rack shaft disposed at a midpoint of a tie rod which connects tires on both sides, and

said pinion shaft and said rack shaft are adapted to convert a rotational movement from said steering shaft to a linear movement of said tie rod.

4-6. (canceled):

7. (currently amended): A steering locking device according to Claim 2 wherein said locking device is provided on a lower side of [[a]] said rack shaft near a lower end of said pinion shaft of said steering gear section.

8. (currently amended): A steering locking device according to Claim 3, wherein said locking device is provided on a lower side of [[a]] said rack shaft near a lower end of said pinion shaft of said steering gear section.

9. (currently amended): A steering locking device ~~according to Claim 1,~~ comprising a locking device for automatically locking a steering shaft when a key of an ignition switch is withdrawn in a state in which said key is withdrawable,

wherein a key mechanism section and said locking device of said ignition switch are provided separately, and

~~wherein~~ said locking device is integrally formed with ~~said~~ a steering gear section having a rack & pinion mechanism,

said rack & pinion mechanism including: a pinion shaft connected to said steering shaft; and a rack shaft disposed at a midpoint of a tie rod which connects tires on both sides, and

said pinion shaft and said rack shaft are adapted to convert a rotational movement from said steering shaft to a linear movement of said tie rod.

10. (currently amended): A steering locking device according to Claim 2, wherein said locking device is integrally formed with said rack & pinion mechanism ~~steering gear section~~.

11. (currently amended): A steering locking device according to Claim 3, wherein said locking device is integrally formed with said pinion shaft ~~steering gear section~~.

12. (currently amended): A steering locking device according to Claim 3, wherein said locking device has a key lock collar, said key lock collar is formed on ~~an output~~ said pinion shaft ~~of said steering wheel~~ via a ring member ~~such as a tolerance ring~~.

13. (canceled):

14. (currently amended) A steering locking device according to Claim 3, wherein said locking device has a key lock collar, said key lock collar is directly fixed to ~~an output~~ said pinion shaft ~~of said steering wheel~~ by welding.

15. (canceled):

16. (currently amended): A steering locking device according to Claim 3, wherein a groove for a key lock is formed to ~~an output~~ said pinion shaft ~~of said steering wheel~~.

17. (canceled):

18. (currently amended): A steering locking device according to Claim 2 [[1]], wherein said locking device electrically makes a lock pin reciprocate based on a key information supplied via a harness connector.

19. (new) A steering locking device comprising a locking device for automatically locking a steering shaft when a key of an ignition switch is withdrawn in a state in which said key is withdrawable,

wherein a key mechanism section and said locking device of said ignition switch are provided separately, and

said locking device is provided on a side of an output shaft of a speed reduction unit of a column-type electric power steering apparatus, and

said speed reduction unit reduces a drive force of a motor and transmits it to said output shaft connected to said steering shaft.

20. (new) A steering locking device according to claim 19, wherein said locking device is provided on said output shaft of said speed reduction unit.

21. (new) A steering locking device according to claim 19, wherein said locking device is provided on a yoke connected to said output shaft of said speed reduction unit.

22. (new) A steering locking device according to claim 20, wherein said locking device has a key lock collar, said key lock collar is formed on said output shaft via a ring member.

23. (new) A steering locking device according to claim 20, wherein said locking device has a key lock collar, said key lock collar is directly fixed to said output shaft by welding.

24. (new) A steering locking device according to claim 20, wherein a groove for a key lock is formed to said output shaft.

25. (new) A steering locking device according to claim 19, wherein said locking device electrically makes a lock pin reciprocate based on a key information supplied via a harness connector.